





AN  
ORATION,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

ADDISON COUNTY ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY,

ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY, 1836.

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BY EDWARD D. BARBER.

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MIDDLEBURY :  
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1836.

MIDDLEBURY, JUNE 20, 1836.

E. D. BARBER, Esq.,

SIR,—I am directed by the Executive Committee of the Addison County Anti-Slavery Society, to request you to deliver an Oration before said Society on the fourth of July next. The Committee are solicitous, sir, that you will find it consistent with your other engagements to comply with this invitation.

Your obedient servant,

M. D. GORDON, *Rec. Sec.*

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E. D. BARBER, Esq.,

DEAR SIR,—We are directed by the Addison County Anti-Slavery Society to present you its thanks for the Oration delivered by you this day, in vindication of those righteous principles of liberty which it is the design of the association to promote, and to request a copy for the press.

We are, dear sir,

Very respectfully,

Your fellow citizens,

JONATHAN A. ALLEN,	} <i>Executive Committee.</i>
CHAUNCEY COOK,	
M. D. GORDON,	
OLIVER JOHNSON,	
B. CARPENTER,	

Middlebury, July 4, 1836.

## ORATION.

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WE have met, fellow citizens, on a day consecrated in the hearts of us all by patriotic and blessed recollections. It is the natal day of our country's independence. Hallowed as it is by the toils and blood of our fathers, it should be held sacred to human liberty and human rights. Though we come not together with banner and trumpet, with parade and ceremony, yet we feel that is good to hail its annual return with tokens of joy and thanksgiving. We would not forget the countless blessings and priceless benefits which have been conferred upon us by our heroic sires, but would rather, under the inspiration of the memories which the occasion brings with it, recount their daring achievements, their sacrifices, their sufferings, their toils, their privations, their patient endurance, their self-sacrificing devotion, their trials and their triumphs, that we might enjoy the rich inheritance which they thus purchased for us. It is good for us to drink in the spirit which animated *their* bosoms—to catch the fervor of *their* devotion to the rights of man—to break the sluggishness of our own patriotism by estimating the price they paid for the privileges amid which our lot is cast—and to enkindle within our own bosoms those lofty emotions which carried them through want, defeat, despondency and disaster to the proudest triumph in the annals of the world. That soul must, indeed, be dead, that, on this day, with the voice of the past whispering in his ear the deeds of his revolutionary fathers and tuning his heart to the music of freedom, does not swell with unwonted emotions and kindle with the noblest aspirations. With such influences upon him, the sealed fountains of his bosom must be broken up and from their inmost depths will come welling up the sweetest waters of patriotism—the purest flowings of the spirit of liberty.

But this anniversary should never be permitted to pass without a recurrence to the principles which were asserted by our forefathers—established by the revolution and made the basis of our political fabric. In our devotions to the *name* we should not forget the *spirit* of liberty. If we boast of our institutions, and spend our breath in panegyrics upon those who founded them, let us, at least, be sure to know what they are, for what they were established and how they are regarded. While we dwell upon the memories of our sires and exalt them to be saints in the calendars of freedom, let us be certain that the doctrines for which they bled, are worthy of acceptance, and that we are not despising and rejecting them. Was the American Revolution a contest about *words*? Was there nothing of eternal, immutable *right* in the principles for which those who achieved it, perilled their all—their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor? Did they bare their bosoms to death, and hazard their memories to infamy, for mere abstractions, that should be the watchwords of liberty to-day and the maxims of a discarded philosophy to-morrow? Were the doctrines of the revolution got up as the mere stalking horses of faction and rebellion—to delude by their speciousness and mislead by their falsity—to become, when

they had answered a present purpose, the mere puppets of expediency and be exalted as the axioms of freedom at one time and sneered at as vagaries at another? Were they, and are they not rather the immovable foundations of all that is sacred in human rights and ennobling in human liberty? Shall we so libel the memories of Washington and his com-patriots, as to say that they attempted to dignify, as realities, the whims of the fancy or the flourishes of the rhetorician? The blood shed on Bunker's desperate mount, on the victorious heights of Bemis, on the blazing plains of Monmouth and the fatal field of Camden, would cry *shame*, on such a declaration. The noble self-devotion, the holy perseverance, the untold sufferings and boundless sacrifices of those who reared the splendid fabric of our government, bear irrefutable testimony that their labors were directed to what they deemed the most inestimable of human blessings. And what were the principles of the Revolution? We have them in the noble instrument by which our fathers declared themselves independent of British power. The broad foundation of government which is there laid, is briefly comprised in the following sentences:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that when any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundations on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

On this endurable basis of human rights has been reared the proud superstructure of the American Republic. And is not the banner of such a government the refuge of the oppressed of all nations? May not the bleeding victims of rapacity and tyrannous exaction find protection behind the *Aegis* which is thus extended to guard the "inalienable rights" of man? Surely, the contemner of human liberty, who dares to raise his hand against the life and liberty of his neighbor and snatch him by violence from the pursuit of happiness, must meet, amid the influences of such a government and the exalted patriotism of its citizens, that scorn and indignation which shall send him cowering from the haunts of men, the outcast from sympathy and hope. Surely, most surely, whenever the manacled slave, escaping from the time worn despotisms of the old world, plants his foot on the soil protected by institutions formed upon such models, his chains fall, and he starts, at once regenerated, into the dignity of manhood and the glorious exaltation of freedom. Oh! my country would it were so! How appropriate to thy principles and yet how false to thy practice! The banner of this Republic, instead of being a "refuge for the stricken slave," floats above the clanking of chains, the resounding of the lash, the shrieks of the scourged victim, and the crouching of the subdued spirit, and in the waving of its gorgeous folds is no sign of hope or mercy to the oppressed. The spots most hallowed in the recollections of the patriot—the very *Meccas* of freedom are trod by the fettered heel and wept over by the crushed spirit.

"By storied hill and hallowed grot,  
By mossy wood and marshy glen,  
Whence rang of old the rifle shot  
And hurrying shout of Marion's men!

The groan of breaking hearts is there,  
 The falling lash—the fetter's clank,  
*Slaves*—*SLAVES* are breathing in that air  
 Which old DeKalb and Sumpter drank."

American slavery, then, should be the subject of discussion, animadversion and indignant eloquence on every anniversary of our country's independence, until not a bondman is found within its borders. The free spirit of our fathers should be rekindled in the bosoms of their degenerate sons, & their stern, though beneficent principles should be proclaimed, with trumpet tongue, in every corner of the land on the day most hallowed in its annals. The present, instead of being an appropriate occasion to boast of virtues which we do not possess, and to minister to national vanity, by inflated declamation of a freedom which to millions of our countrymen is a mockery, should be a time for humiliation, that American liberty is but the hiding place of the most bitter oppression.

My purpose is to direct your attention to slavery as a national evil, and the means of its correction as such.

It will not be necessary for me to give you an extended description of what American slavery is. It is sufficient to know that *it is slavery*—that it is depriving human beings of their "inalienable rights"—that it is shutting them out from every degree of liberty—leaving them no means of pursuing their own happiness and subjecting even their lives to the capriciousness of a tyrant's will—that it transforms *men* into *things*—subjects them to be sold as merchandize—deprives them of the exercise of the best and holiest affections of the human heart—shuts them out from knowledge—makes them instruments to minister to the rapacity and lust of their masters—crushes the spirit of freedom and manhood in their souls—renders them abject and brutal in their aspirations, and degrades those who are created in the image of God, to the condition of the brute. The slave of this republic has *no* rights—he has no right to himself—to the use of his limbs or the rewards of his toil—even his children and his wife are another's *property*. The powers of his mind and the energies of his body are directed by a will not his own, and his life is one long round of toil, suffering and despair. The hour of death only, is the hour of emancipation to him. Here, then, we have an institution in the midst of us, which is founded on the destruction of those very principles—those "self-evident truths," which are the corner stones of our political edifice! An institution which *denies* that "all men are created equal"—that they "are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights"—and that "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" belong to all alike; and the government of the country, instead of securing those rights to each individual, suffers them, in millions of cases, to be seized upon and yielded up to the most unlimited despotism.

Now what effect must the existence of this institution have upon the sentiment of the nation, if it is continued and acquiesced in? Is not every man who silently yields his assent to its continuance, directly assenting to the overthrow of the great principles of the Declaration of Independence? Is he not *living down* those principles—making them a dead letter—treating them as though they were not everlasting truths, upon which rest the happiness, elevation and glory of his race, but as doctrines to be asserted and maintained only when they are necessary for his good and the good of

those whose skin is colored like his own? The inevitable result of an acquiescence in the continuance of slavery in this government, will be to drag down the public sentiment of the non-slaveholding states, to a debasing approximation to that of the slave-holding ones. A hesitation now to assert the principles of universal freedom and the inviolability of the rights which God has given to all men, will soon end in open neglect of those principles and rights, and finally sink into a base subserviency to the views of those who live in their habitual violation. If the eternal principles of liberty are not boldly proclaimed and resolutely defended, in defiance of power, in the face of ambition, and in the teeth of interest, how soon will freedom become but a name—a shadow without the substance—the gilded sepulchre of human rights—the garnished mausoleum of the dearest interests of humanity. If the *spirit* of liberty is not maintained with its *forms*, it is but a mockery. If, while we celebrate with bonfires and illuminations, with the thunders of artillery, the shouts of the populace, and the waving of banners, with pomp and ceremony, with anthem and oration, the independence and freedom of our country, we, at the same time, look with complacency upon the slave auctions, slave prisons, slave ships and slave drivers, which disgrace, deform and infest the capital of the republic, to what does all our parade and noise amount, but hollow pageantry and heartless sound? If any one among us feels, as he *should* feel, his bosom will burn with indignation at the *thought*, that a slave market can exist on any spot guarded by the Eagle of American Liberty. The public feeling and tone on the subject of slavery have gone fearfully backward in this nation since the days of the revolution. The sentiment which prevailed this day 1776, is but faintly shadowed forth by that of the present time. As the sun of our glory has risen higher in the heavens, his rays have become dimmer and his radiance less genial. In the time of our forefathers, though slavery existed among us, not a voice was ever raised in its defence—there was no thought then, how it should be *perpetuated*, but how it should be *abolished*. The patriots of the North and South held the same sentiments in relation to its continuance. Its existence was recognized in the constitution, not with the intention that it should be sanctioned thereby and its evils prolonged, but with the earnest wish and expectation of the framers of that instrument that it would speedily be abandoned. Franklin, Jay, Rush, and a host of others in the North labored in conjunction with Jefferson and others in the South for its extinction. The tendency of public opinion at that day throughout the nation was to its abolition. But the spirit and feeling of those times passed away with the race that produced and nourished them. The country became gradually silent upon the subject and the gloom of the evil become deeper and darker. The bird of eagle eye and wing was chased from his own chosen eyry, by the croakings of the raven of domestic despotism. The voice of condemnation—the pleadings of love—the remonstrances of candor—the appeals of patriotism, and the stern rebukes of justice were all hushed, and the land finally slept in a moral lethargy. The public conscience was paralyzed—the public sentiment was voiceless, and the Goliath of public patriotism slept in the lap of the Delilah of tyranny—his locks shorn—his heavy slumbers unbroken by the shrieks of the slave and his giant limbs grown nerveless by inaction and effeminacy. In the mean time, the monster, Slavery, grew apace. The shackle half knocked from the limbs of the bondman, was re-riveted—the



ear that had become sensitive to the pleadings of humanity, grew deaf to the increasing entreaties—the hand half stretched to the deliverance of the bleeding captive, sank powerless by the side, or became nerved for deeds of atrocity—the eye that grew moist with pity at the wrongs of the innocent and defenceless, became slowly callous to the stripes and agonies of the lacerated victims, and the soul that began to glow with the impulses of philanthropy and love, grew chill in all its generous sympathies. And now, when the cry of Freedom is up again and her clarion voice is heard throughout the land, Slavery, instead of cowering to her dungeons and hiding her whips and chains from the eye of scrutiny, erects her foul and snaky form through half the borders of the Republic—hisses her proud defiance to the efforts of the free—coils her tortuous folds more closely around her million victims and proclaims herself, with undaunted front, the mother, the nurse, the patron, the guardian of holy liberty! Oh! most impious assumption! Most foul aspersion upon the memories of our sires!

Thus we see, fellow citizens, to what even *indifference* in the cause of human rights, most directly and inevitably leads. There can be no neutral ground between freedom and slavery. To be silent when our neighbor is despoiled of his liberty, degraded and imbruted, is but a step towards becoming the spoilers ourselves. If we do not go forward in behalf of the oppressed, we shall, most assuredly go backward. The issue which is now made up before the people of the United States, between the opposers and advocates of involuntary servitude is, *Shall slavery be perpetual?* Who is there, with soul so dead that he will say, yea, to such a proposition?

But is this a matter with which the whole people of the United States are concerned? What have we at the North, who have no slaves, to do with slavery in the South? Is it of no concern to us that this principle of evil exists in the nation—is at war with the genius and the fundamental doctrines of our institutions and is constantly degrading and besotting the spirit of the people? Is it nothing that it renders us,

“The Christian’s scorn—the Heathen’s mirth.”?

Are we to rest calmly with the brand of infamy hissing on our foreheads, in consequence of the connexion which we have with its bonds of blood? Ought we not at least to wash our hands before the world, of any acquiescence in its wrongs and guilt? But as men and philanthropists have we nothing to do in this matter? Why, let me ask, are the chords of our hearts so tuned that the cry of the injured—the wail of the oppressed and the supplications of the needy find a ready response within us and impel us to their relief? Why do we burn with indignation at the relation of wrong and outrage? Why do we instinctively fly to the succor of the distressed? It is because God has given to man, in these impulses of his nature, a hold upon his fellow—a shield from his rapacity and a barrier to his wrath. He has bound together the human family by these impalpable, though enduring bonds, for the most glorious and beneficent purposes. In these emotions of our souls are found the strongest bulwarks of human freedom. They are breakwaters, built up by the Almighty in the ocean of human passion. From these sympathies flow forth the purest aspirations of philanthropy—the noblest efforts of patriotism. Without these the world would be one vast Aceldama—there would be no right except in the strong arm—no liberty

except in the might of the conqueror—no ear to listen to the cry of the injured and no hand to save the “wringing slaves of wrong.” To stifle these emotions, then, is to do violence to the “divinity that stirs within us”—it is to outrage the spirit that gave us our own liberties, and that is our surest defence against the approaches of despotism. And shall Americans have no feeling for the bondmen in their own borders? Shall their sympathies be squandered upon the oppressed of other climes, while millions of their own countrymen bow beneath a yoke more galling than that which frets upon the neck of the Eastern serf?

“What! Shall we send with lavish breath,  
Our sympathies across the wave,  
Where manhood on the field of death  
Strikes for his freedom or a grave?  
Shall prayers go up and hymns be sung  
For Greece, the Moslem fetter spurning,  
And millions hail with pen and tongue,  
*Our* light on all her altars burning?”

Shall Belgium feel and gallant France  
By Vendome's pile and Schoenbrunn's wall,  
And Poland, gasping on her lance,  
The impulse of our cheering call?  
And shall the *SLAVE* beneath our eye  
Clank o'er our fields his hateful chain,  
And toss his fettered arms on high  
And groan for freedom's gift in vain?”

Ay, shall it be a concern of ours to cheer the Pole in his death struggle for freedom and to feed the Greek while striking for the renovation of his country's liberties, and yet have nothing to do with beating the chain from the thrall of the Santee and Potomac? How shall the nations of the old world laugh to scorn our hypocrisy, if, while we cheer on the oppressed of their soils to victory we help to fasten the manacle on our own countrymen! How should we libel the American name and bring hissing upon American patriotism! As men, as philanthropists, as patriots and above all, as *Americans*, we have something to do with slavery.

How often do we hear it said, that we ought not to meddle with slavery, because it is recognised by the constitution. What! shall we live under a constitution that recognises the existence of such an institution, and have no right to purge the land of the evil? Are we forbidden to touch those subjects which are embraced in the constitution? It is because the supreme law of the land recognises the existence of this blot upon our institutions, that we feel bound to labor to wash it away. It is because we live in a slaveholding government, that the necessity is laid upon us to wipe the stain from our escutcheon. While we continue to sanction, even by our silence, this antagonist principle of freedom amongst us, we are waging a direct war upon the existence of the government itself. Slavery and free institutions cannot exist in contact for a long time; the one must, sooner or later, destroy the other. By the constitution, we are indirectly made responsible for the continuance of slavery as long as the cupidity and perverseness of the slaveholder may remain unsubdued. The whole power of the free states is pledged to the suppression of “domestic violence” in the slave states, and is thus arrayed against the efforts of the slave for freedom so long as the system is perpetuated. And shall we be bound to protect the slaveholder in his oppression and not be permitted, by peaceable means

to remove the cause of so unholly an obligation? Shall this plague-stricken body be chained to the freemen of this country, and they have no power to cast off the loathsome burden? But the people of the free states are *directly* guilty of this great evil. They hold in their own hands the chains that are fastened around the necks of their countrymen. This government is not by implication, but by practice, a slaveholding government. Its laws permit slavery—it sells the privilege of slave trafficking—its very capital is the greatest slave mart in the world. Congress legislate, not to make the black men free, but to render surer his thralldom. With the power in their own hands, the free states not only suffer slavery to exist, in its most revolting features, in the District under the “exclusive jurisdiction” of the general government, but even refuse to mitigate its horrors! Even the Congress which closes its session this day, has put forth, by a committee selected for that very purpose, an elaborate show of reasons why the capital of the nation, should continue to be a *depot* of human merchandise—a costly bundle of sickly arguments and miserable sophistries to prove that it is “*inexpedient*” to restore to men their “*inalienable rights*”!

Let him who thinks that slavery is no concern of ours, walk with me for a moment to the city which bears the name of the father of his country—behold there thousands of our fellow men dragging out their lives in hopeless servitude—see the mansion even of the chief magistrate of the republic surrounded with slaves—look at the gazettes which are groaning with speeches of reverend legislators in honor of liberty, crowded with advertisements for human beings, *for whom the highest prices will be paid*—see the slave driver and soul trafficker stalk unabashed through its streets—behold that long line of men, women and children go clanking the coffin under the very walls of the capitol—see yon prison filled with the victims of oppression—listen to the groans and shrieks and agonies, mingled with the resounding of the lash, which fill its vaults—behold yon ship freighted with human flesh and blood, with fettered limbs and bursting hearts, sailing for the land of doom and death—turn then to the human shambles—see the image of God sold to the highest bidder—see the husband torn from the wife and the parents riven from the children and see Oh! see! the tortured soul stifle its holiest emotions under the terror of the lash; and having seen and heard all this, tell me, if he who willingly suffers these things to continue one moment while he has a voice to tell against them, is not a participator in these atrocities—is not verily guilty of abetting them all? And all this because the representatives of freemen yield to the haughty demands of the representatives of slaveholders and their slaves. Because those who have the power to arrest these outrages, do not *concern* themselves with exercising that power!

What a tissue of absurdities and inconsistencies is American freedom and American legislation! While we spend our breath in boasting of the liberal principles of our government and the humanizing spirit of our institutions, our country is more deeply besotted with the spirit of slaveholding than any other nation on the face of the globe. Our orators in Congress prate loud and long and daily of the rights of man and the blessings of free governments, and they do it with the clank of the slave's chain, the crack of the slave driver's whip and the rap of the slave auctioneer's hammer ringing in their ears. Our national legislature gravely enacts the African slave trade to be piracy and punishes it with death, while an equally horrible traffic is carried on without notice or animadversion, under its own eyes between the different states of the union—ay, between the District of Columbia itself and the southern portions of the republic. Nay

Congress even permits men to be arrested and imprisoned in the Capital, on a *suspicion* that they are not *free*, and instead of presuming them to be possessed of their "inalienable rights," until it is proved that they have been robbed of them, it is assumed, that they are not American citizens, entitled to liberty and the protection of the laws unless they can prove it, by some higher evidence than the impress of the Almighty ; and failing to do this, they are sold into perpetual bondage, to pay the fees occasioned by their country's *suspecting* them not to be, what its great Bill of Rights declares every man to be, *free* ! This is the *legalized piracy* of freedom ! We claim that our example in the cause of liberty, is giving free institutions to the priest and king-ridden people of other nations and boast what a redeeming spirit we are sending abroad throughout the world to spread liberal principles and raise up free governments, while we are rapidly adding states to our confederacy whose constitutions not only permit the existence of slavery but in one instance *even prohibit its abolition* ! We call America the asylum of the oppressed and the refuge of the fugitives from tyranny, and yet when our own countrymen fly from the toils and stripes of slavery and seek refuge on a soil protected by a free constitution, instead of finding an asylum, they find a dungeon and a return to bondage the only mercies in store for them. How humiliating is the contemplation of such inconsistencies in our government ! And yet how necessary is such contemplation to feel fully how great is the evil of slavery and how deeply we are implicated in its existence !

That slavery is a concern of ours as men, as philanthropists, as patriots and above all as *Americans*, cannot be denied. How then shall we arrest its horrors and banish it from the country ? *It must be done by the power of truth upon the minds and consciences of the nation.* The revolution which must take place before slavery is overthrown in this nation, must be a signal though a bloodless one—a revolution in the hearts of the people. It has been commenced, is progressing and must be consummated by discussion—*free, manly, earnest discussion.*

In the contest which is waging on this subject, even the most obvious and vital principles of liberty and of free institutions, have not only to be re-asserted, but maintained in the face of public odium and in defiance of violence and outrage. Even the right of *discussing* this subject has been drawn in question, and to the phrensy of the slaveholder, have been added the denunciations of the non-slaveholder, against the efforts of anti-slavery men. If we yield the right in one instance, on any pretences of *delicacy—interference with matters not belonging to us—and meddling with things we do not understand*, we yield the entire principle. For who does not see that pretexts equally plausible may be framed to gag inquiry on any question which may be allied to the cupidity of the vile, the insolence of the powerful, and the licentiousness of the unprincipled ? The right must be maintained *in the abstract* and not one jot or tittle of it must be yielded to any man or set of men on any pretext whatever. It is a right given by God—it is antecedent to human enactments and human constitutions—it is an essential attribute of intellectual as well as political freedom ; and must be held inviolable by every government which aims to secure to its citizens the blessings of liberty. For what did God create the mysterious machinery of the human mind ? Was it to minister to the appetites of the animal portion of our natures—to centre its energies in self and decay in slothfulness ? It is too noble a creation for such a destiny. Its powers are fitted for higher purposes. It was made to explore the worlds of matter, mind and emotion—to search out the blessings which

lie stored in the universe of God for his creatures and to bring forth from the store house of nature, the treasures of science, philosophy and art. Its element is inquiry—it secures its conquests only by discussion. It is this principle of moral power which has shaken the trammels of ignorance, superstition and bigotry from the human mind and elevated it to the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty.

This freedom of inquiry is a necessary element in every free government—it is, indeed the vital principle in its organization. Intelligence is requisite to a sound public opinion, and intelligence is the offspring of inquiry and investigation. Institutions of government are popular in their nature and structure only so far as they give scope to the activity of this engine of good. The public sentiment can have no force only so far as it is enlightened and elevated, and it can be enlightened and elevated only in proportion as the means of information are multiplied and the conflict of minds in the arena of public discussion elicits the truth. Accordingly our institutions are based on this great conservative principle of popular rights and popular power. The government is so organized as to feel the play of, and body forth the public opinion, which is the creature of those main instruments of discussion, the freedom of speech and of the press. To secure the great safeguard of liberty, of which I am speaking, from encroachment, the constitution provides that “Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or the press.” The power to restrict discussion is taken entirely away. Every measure of government, every institution and every question of public interest, are, therefore, open to animadversion and scrutiny, slavery among the rest.

This principle in a free government is mighty to the abolishing of the abuses of darker ages, and to the tearing down of the strong holds of oppression and tyranny. It possesses, also, a renovating and life-giving influence, and is constantly establishing new guards and setting new watches to secure the immunities of the people. It knows no resting place in the march of human improvement. It removes the rubbish of exploded theories and batters down the antiquated and useless bulwarks around the temple of freedom, in order to erect on the spots where they stood, more noble and durable structures.

This single engine is adequate to the overthrow of slavery. By means of it let the simple doctrines, that slavery is a sin, and ought immediately to be repented of—that the black man has rights of which he is robbed and that they ought immediately to be restored to him—and that this can be done with safety and benefit to both master and slave, be promulgated, enforced and elucidated, till they come home to the bosoms and consciences of the American people, and the great work will approach its consummation. Let them but once be engrafted upon the public mind, as being what they in reality are, undeniable truths, and the work is done. But even these simple doctrines, which ought to be received as axioms in religion and freedom, cannot be introduced into the public sentiment except by discussion—by earnest remonstrance—by the exhibition of facts—by appeals to history and experience—by solemn warning and admonition—by persuasion and argument and exhortation. The public opinion and feeling are perverted—they sustain, protect, and even cherish slavery. When they are corrected, slavery is abolished.

This revolution cannot be commenced in the South, because there the sentiment and moral sense of the people are vitiated. Slavery has incorporated itself into their habits of life and their modes of thinking. They have become, by a long course of familiarity with it, and by perverse rea-

sonings and teachings, wed to its enormities and insensible to its wrongs. The South need not simply to be *aroused from indifference*, they must be *converted from idolatry*. In the North, on the other hand, though slavery has spread its baneful dogmas through the community and the public mind has been lulled by false professions into false hopes and a fatal security, and the public conscience has been drugged, by opiates of sin, into a death-like slumber, still, the minds of the people, when properly awakened to the subject, are not vitiated. These false hopes may be chased from their imaginations and their consciences may be aroused from that lethargy. The work, then must commence in the free states. The public sentiment must first be set right there and it will then spread with irresistible sway over the South. That there is need of correction in the sentiment of the North, requires no argument to prove. Once you could not have heard a whisper of approval of slavery or of acquiescence in its continuance. Now the popular cry is—*it is no concern of ours, let the South have their slavery and take care of their slaves—to discuss slavery is an intermeddling with what we do not understand—the slaves of the South are better off than the laboring class of the North—it would render the condition of the slaves much worse to emancipate them—the South cannot exist without their slaves—we must stand by the people of the South in defence of their domestic institutions and help them to put down the fanatics who contend that the negro has rights*. Nay, it is no uncommon thing to hear northern freemen, libelling the goodness of the common father of men, by impiously declaring *that they believe the black man was created to be a slave!* And can the public sentiment of a free government which tolerates such monstrous doctrines be correct? Now a full and faithful discussion of slavery will banish these heresies from the free states and place the subject on a true and immoveable foundation.

What has not discussion done on other questions of like moment and like concernment? How was the Slave Trade abolished in England? That terrible traffic had once got the same mastery of the public mind and public voice in that country, that slavery has in this. But the efforts of the self-devoted Clarkson and his patriotic associates, aroused the sleeping spirit of freedom in British hearts and they drove the horrible abuse from their shores. And that noble triumph of liberty was achieved by discussion—by discussion in the face of popular fury—amid the denunciations of avarice—in defiance of sneers and scoffings and against the influence of Lords spiritual and Lords temporal.

How let me ask is any great reform, either in morals or politics, accomplished, except by a resort to this very instrument of operation? How is the demon of Intemperance assaulted and subdued? How is a political heresy overthrown? Most obviously by the power of discussion correcting public opinion. And shall that which is equal to the task of settling disputed theories and nice questions of law and ethics, be powerless in establishing the first great principles of liberty—in setting up in the hearts of a people nurtured on a soil redeemed by the blood of patriots, the worship of freedom, trodden down by corrupting avarice and heartless power? Shall that which can arouse the sensibilities—stir up the affections—awaken the energies—exalt the imagination—sharpen the intellect and render keen the moral sense, on every other question of human responsibilities, of human rights and of human sufferings, fail in the cause of the bleeding, the outcast and the helpless slave?

But, it is said, to discuss this subject out of the slave states will do no good, because the people of those states have the sole control and the sole

power of legislation over it. It is for the reason, that the *people* of the South have the control of it, that we rely upon the power of discussion and public opinion, to effect the desired object. If slavery existed in despotic governments there, we should have no means of reaching it—it would then be controlled by an Autocrat or an Aristocracy whom discussion or the public voice would not affect—they would continue or abolish it, as they should deem either course most in accordance with considerations of political expediency. But where the people are the source of power, you have but to obtain their voice in favor of any measure and the object is accomplished. Their will is law. And are we to take it for granted that the people of the South cannot be converted from their errors in relation to this matter? Have they not souls and cannot those souls be touched? Have they not sympathies and cannot those sympathies be moved? Have they not consciences and cannot those consciences be pricked? Have they not minds and cannot those minds be convinced? Is slavery capable of being defended, that they cannot be won from its embrace and led to its rejection? Is it so great a blessing, that they will cling to it as a household god? Is it so great a safeguard to themselves and families that they cannot be induced to part with its protection? Is its morality so chastening that they cannot separate themselves from its influences? On the contrary every thing conspires to render it impossible for them to sustain slavery.

It is said again, that discussion only produces exasperation at the South. And why are the people of that section exasperated? Are they offended at statements they can disprove? At arguments they can refute? At doctrines that are unsound? Certainly not. Men do not act thus. They are exasperated because they find themselves in a false position before the world. Their interest, ease and habits are at war with truth and conscience, and they bluster because they have no other defence for their conduct—they *rail* because they cannot *reason*. They are much in the same predicament that certain artists of old were—they have little to say in favor of the Dianian shrines nor can they refute the doctrines of Paul and his associates, and, as the only resort left, they senselessly shout for the Goddess and brutally mob the Apostles. The true secret of the violence of the South is, that the real slave-holder, who is wedded to the system, fears the force of truth upon the consciences of those who are yet within the pale of philanthropy and within the influence of religion and patriotism. The very champions of the system even, admit substantially the truth of this remark. Who can doubt, then, that the South occupying such a position, must fail to maintain it; and when once the charm of their system is broken, freedom begins to dawn amid the darkness of their despotism. Their very phrensy will, in the end, react and become a powerful instrument in urging forward emancipation.

Suppose now we give ourselves up to the guidance and instruction of the opponents of emancipation and discussion, and let us see where we shall land—what will be the results of their arguments when carried out into practice. They say that neither the free states nor Congress have any legislative power over slavery, in the slaveholding states. Granted. They say that by the constitution the people of the free states are bound, when called upon in the prescribed manner, to assist the South in quelling “domestic violence.” Granted. They say, too, that the people of the free states have no right to discuss the subject of slavery with a view to its abolition. Now if we admit this proposition also, to what do we arrive but that slavery must continue as long as the *slaveholder* may choose to cling to it, and that even the *physical force of the free states must guaranty its ex-*

*istence to him against all attempts of the slave to regain his lost rights—to shake off a yoke, in comparison with which the one our fathers resisted, for which resistance we revere their memories, was but as a straw. Surely such a doctrine is slavish enough for any in midian!*

But the objection most often resorted to, against the discussion of this subject and most calculated to deter those who have not examined the merits of the question presented them, from attending to it, is, *that it will dissolve the Union*—that the south will not submit to any attempts to abolish slavery, but will rather rend the bonds that bind the states together. No man reverences the Union more than I do. The last thing I would knowingly do, would be to give any just cause for the severance of the national compact. But who does not know that slavery more directly threatens the dissolution of the Union, independent of the question of its abolition, than all other causes put together? Had I time it were an easy task to show that it has been working mischief from the very organization of the government. It creates an interest in the country that is entirely at war with the interests of freemen. It is a discordant and jarring chord in the harmonies of our system. Slave labor and free labor cannot both well exist in the same government. The legislation which is beneficial to the one is destructive to the prosperity of the other. And while this is the case, although the slaves are considered as so much property—as so much live stock, in short—they send into Congress twenty five representatives to influence and control the legislation of the country. This power has been again and again used for the purpose of cramping the energies of free labor. The policy of the South, arising from this institution among them, has ever been hostile to that of the other portions of the union, especially New England. Take for instance the question of the Tariff. After the close of the last war when the daring enterprise of northern freemen had carried the commerce of the nation into every sea and they were reaping the rich rewards of their toil and dangers, southern statesmen, jealous of the prosperity of freedom, and wishing to throw the burthen of the national debt from their slave gains upon the commerce and consumption of the free states, originated the system of imposts, instead of the *direct tax* which had previously been resorted to and by which the South were made to contribute to the public treasury in proportion to their representation in Congress, for the avowed purpose of encouraging manufactures. They succeeded and the commerce of New England was crippled. But her indomitable freemen immediately changed the direction of their efforts and adapted their enterprise to the new state of things, and the “industry of freedom,” though stricken down for a moment by slavery, had no soon r touched the earth, than it rose again, Antaeus-like, with irrepressible energy, turning the very engine wielded for its destruction into a kind of Philosopher’s Stone. Manufactures sprang up as by enchantment and the golden stream flowed once more in the channels of northern enterprise. The South was again left behind in the career of prosperity, loaded as she was by the incubus of slavery. Then came the war upon the Tariff system and the Union was saved only by yielding up that system *which the South originated*, to Slaveholding Nullification! Thus has slavery ever warred upon the interests of the free states and thus it ever will; and whenever the people of those states, tired of the exactions and wrongs inflicted upon them by this principle of evil, shall maintain their own interests against those of the South and in defiance of their menaces, then will come the dissolution of the Union in reality.

Slavery has operated, moreover, as a sort of talisman, to keep the south.



ern states banded together, by means of which they have given the republic four out of six Presidents and kept the patronage of the general government and the veto power in the hands of a slaveholder thirty two out of forty years.\* The tendency of all these things is to the smothering of the Union, and slavery is the cause of them all. Remove that and you take from this people the Apple of Discord.

But upon what pretext will the South dissolve the Union? Because freemen will not consent to put gags in their mouths and padlocks on their presses? Because they insist upon exercising undoubted constitutional rights? Because they will not submit to the dictation and succumb to the violence of southern task masters and crouch like their own slaves under their threatenings? And to secure what, are such concessions to be made? *The perpetuity of slavery!* It comes, then, to this, that the South in the plenitude of their magnanimity and patriotism offer to perpetuate the Union on the very modest conditions, that we yield up to them the right of free discussion and acquiesce in silence, in the existence of an institution which robs millions of our fellow men of that which the Union was designed to secure to all, *freedom!* Most generous people! to grant as the continuance of the government on such terms! Who will not say, that if the Union is to be preserved on such conditions alone, it is not worth preserving, and if the South choose to dissolve it for such causes, let them dissolve it and take the consequences. On this point I adopt the language of an eloquent writer of the day.†

"If the Union can be preserved only by the imposition of chains on speech and the press, by a prohibition of discussion on a subject involving the most sacred rights and dearest interests of humanity, then Union would be bought at too dear a rate; then it would be changed from a virtuous bond into a league of crime and shame.—Language cannot easily do justice to our attachment to the Union. We will yield every thing to it but Truth, Honor and Liberty. These we can never yield."

To the South it would be an appropriate and sufficient answer to their arrogant demands on this topic, to reply in the words of one of their most renowned champions on a certain occasion—"Liberty *first* and Union *afterwards*." But we adopt the language of a loftier patriotism and a nobler eloquence and say—"Liberty *and* Union, now and forever, one and inseparable."

Let the discussion go on, then, in the name of freedom, humanity and justice.

    "From each and all, if God hath not forsaken  
     Our land, and left us to an evil choice,  
 Loud as the summer thunder bolt shall waken  
                     A PEOPLE'S VOICE!

Startling and stern! the northern winds shall bear it,  
     Over Potomac's to St. Mary's wave;  
 And buried Freedom shall awake to hear it  
                     Within her grave.

O let that voice go forth;—the bondmen sighing  
     By Santee's wave—in Mississippi's cane,  
 Shall feel the hope, within his bosom dying,  
                     Revive again.

Let it go forth!—The millions who are gazing  
     Sadly upon us, from afar, shall smile,  
 And, unto God devout thanksgiving raising,  
                     Bless us the while.

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\* In this estimate no account is made of Washington's administration, as he was the choice of all.

† Dr. Channing.

O, for our ancient freedom, pure and holy,  
 For the deliverance of a groaning earth,  
 For the wronged captive, bleeding, crushed, and lowly,  
 Let it go forth!"

Public opinion cannot be walled in. The people of the South cannot shut it out from their borders. It knows no barriers—is not arrested by geographical boundaries—is not hemmed in by state lines or imprisoned by state legislation. It is a moral atmosphere which spreads itself noiselessly throughout the domains of intellect and intelligence. Like electricity, it mingles itself with all the elements of the moral world and imperceptibly becomes a part of the mental constitution. Neither its progress or its power can be stayed. Its course is onward and its conquests are unceasing. It will infuse itself into the bosoms of our southern brethren and disenthral the buried spirit of liberty there. It will awaken again in them those generous sympathies, those noble purposes and those elevated sentiments which they once so gloriously exhibited and which have no fellowship with slavery. Their pulses will yet beat in unison with those of their northern brethren on this subject. The pleadings for the oppressed which stir New England hearts will yet find a response in Carolinian bosoms; and the shout for Emancipation which shall go up from Bunker's Hill, will be echoed from the field of Guilford and the heights of Yorktown.

The day that shall witness the triumph of public opinion over slavery is fast approaching. From the eminence on which I now stand, I see in the far off distance the great prison house of death. Its gloomy walls, built up on human hearts and cemented by human tears and blood, tower up into the skies with a heaven-insulting glory. Its impious spires and unhallowed domes, burnished with the gold wrung from the sweat and toil of the defenceless, flash defiantly in the sun. It seems to mock the power of the earthquake and the storm. But while I gaze, I see the heaving of the ocean of public opinion, beneath my feet. The great fountains of its deep are breaking up. I hear the moan of the coming tempest as it musters its storm afar off; and the skies gather blackness above my head. The billows go sweeping on in majesty and might. The surge beats upon the base of that proud edifice. The indignant tempest goes careering over the face of the moved waters. The roar of the roused ocean comes thundering upon the ear. The waves, crested with fury, beat with resistless energy upon its massive structures. The waters and the storm are up in their wrath and speak now with an "earthquake voice." I see that Bastile of human hearts tremble from its very base. Its walls are shaking in the elemental war. Behold its towers and turrets nod and topple to their fall. See! its foundations give way—it reels, it sinks, it plunges, is gone, and the waters pass over it and hide it forever! The spirit of peace and love broods over the tempest and it is hushed. The ocean sinks into unruffled calmness and the fury of the storm is stilled. And hark! strains of the sweetest harmony break upon the ear. A chorus of millions of voices comes swelling upon the calm, still air, hymning praises and thanksgivings. It is the music of redeemed hearts and disenthralled spirits. Oh! the sublimity of that song of the free! How its strains are caught from lip to lip; from the valley to the hill top, from mountain to mountain, until the whole land is wrapt in its melody and the skies reverberate with the pealing anthem.



